

LESSON 1

The Colonies Fight for Their Rights

ESSENTIAL QUESTION *Why do people rebel?*

Growing Discontent

GUIDING QUESTION *What actions by Great Britain angered the American colonists after the French and Indian War?*

Great Britain's victory in 1763 left the country deeply in debt. It had to pay not only the cost of the war but also the cost of governing and defending its new territories. Many new policies that the British government adopted to solve its financial problems were unpopular in the colonies.

The Proclamation of 1763

In the spring of 1763, Pontiac, chief of the Ottawa people, decided to go to war against the British. He united several Native American groups and they attacked forts along the frontier and burned down several towns. They did so because settlers had been moving into western Pennsylvania in defiance of a treaty. British leaders did not want to bear the cost of another war.

In early October, King George III issued the Proclamation of 1763. The proclamation drew a north-south line along the Appalachian Mountains. Colonists could not settle west of that line without permission. This enraged many farmers and land speculators, who wanted access to the land.

Customs Reform

In 1763 George Grenville became prime minister and the first lord of the Treasury. Grenville had to find a way to reduce Britain's debt and pay for the 10,000 British troops now stationed in North America.

Grenville knew that merchants were smuggling many goods into and out of the colonies without paying **customs duties**, taxes on imports and exports. He convinced Parliament to pass a law allowing smugglers to be tried at a new vice-admiralty court in Nova Scotia. Unlike colonial courts, where the juries were often sympathetic to smugglers, vice-admiralty courts were run by naval officers. These courts had no juries and did not follow British common law because Admiralty cases involved property not people. Colonists objected, arguing that these courts denied their rights as British citizens.



Samuel Adams 1722-1803

LESSON RESOURCES



View this video on the Boston Massacre.